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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement*/ submitted by the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 January 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English, French and Spanish from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.*2001-0824*

ENG

1) Each year, according to the WHO data, more than 1.000.000 people are killed in road crashes throughout the world, 20 million are injured, from whom 2 million will remain disabled or crippled for life. The socio-economic costs of these casualties, such as medical, juridical and funeral expenses, as well as loss of income and maintenance for relatives, induced psycho-somatic diseases and incapacities for family members, rehabilitation, care and maintenance for permanently disabled and crippled victims including those with brain injury, amount yearly to more than 500 billion US dollars.

2) The situation in the highly motorized countries, which have practically reached the saturation level for the number of cars, is more or less static. In the developing countries, which undergo a rapid development of motorization, the number of road casualties, unfortunately, increases rapidly, in a similar way as they did in developed countries 30 or 40 years ago. Thus, if nothing is done to significantly improve road safety throughout the world, the above, already too high numbers, will continue to increase, principally at the expense of the developing countries.

3) The present situation, which is not due to fate, is absolutely intolerable and contrary to the most fundamental Human Rights. Successful road safety strategies have been developed in some countries, for example in Sweden, where the mortality due to road traffic is per inhabitants, per cars or per kilometers traveled many times lower than in the developing countries and also in some developed ones. These strategies are based on improvements of infrastructure, road signs and vehicles, on improvement of the behavior of drivers and on efficient first help and medical assistance. These strategies are already available and could be transported, possibly adapted, to other countries, as already the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) begins to do.

4) The costs required to implement such successful road safety strategies have proved, in most cases, to be lower than the socio-economic costs they permit to avoid. Many road safety measures cost much less, even ten times less, than the socio-economic cost of crashes. Economically, the implementation of a proper safety policy, at the level of a country, represents an outstanding investment, which is repaid many times, in addition to saving human life and avoiding extreme suffering. The policy to implement in priority the low "cost / benefits" measures is presently practiced by the Commission of the European Union.

5) The FEVR urges Governments, Parliaments and municipalities to implement without delay the most successful road safety strategies, as well as to finance them adequately. The FEVR urges also the United Nations' Economic and Social Council and its concerned subsidiary bodies to actively promote road safety as well as to enshrine the most efficient measures in the various international Treaties, Conventions and Recommendations it is preparing or updating. As mobility is a fundamental Human Right, the Governments have the duty to remove the deadly consequences quoted under item 1).